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## **An ACT against Violence: One Woman's Knowledge**

Tempe, AZ – An article on violence prevention in the American Psychological Association (APA) Journal, lead one Arizona woman to embark on a passion to bring a community together, and increase awareness about the effects of violence among Arizona's youngest population.

With a doctorate in Psychology, Mary Arredondo, has made a two year commitment to educate Arizona's communities about violence using the Adults and Children Together (ACT) Training Program. This program aims to educate professionals, childcare employees and parents on the importance of how to prevent child abuse and/or violence.

"I have seen an increase in childhood aggression and behavior problems in many schools," said Arredondo, a former school psychologist in Tempe. "Parents and adults caring for children are the most influential teachers of young children. That's why it's important to address early violence prevention between infancy and eight years of age."

With experience training community members throughout the state, Arredondo and Denise Lopez, president of the Arizona Association for the Education of Young Children, will be instructing the ACT training in Tempe at the Multi-generational Westside Community Center on January 13, 2005. Currently, the class is full due to the overwhelming number of applicants for the training.

"There has been an increase in research stating that exposure to violence alone, through media or domestic violence in the home, does impact a child's earliest development from zero to eight years," said Arredondo.

The goal of the ACT training is to make child abuse more visible in the community, and garner community members to participate in efforts preventing child abuse before it starts.

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Arredondo and Lopez will instruct ACT participants on how to implement ACT initiatives in the community, how to disseminate information on child development, the development of aggression, anger management, social problem solving, discipline, and media literacy.

Child abuse and/or neglect in Arizona have increased over the last four years. From October 2000 – March 2001 a total of 16,394 cases of child abuse and/or neglect were reported. From October 2003 – March 2004, over 3,500 more cases were reported, totaling 20,242 cases (Arizona Department of Economic Security, Division of Children, Youth and Families).

“This program increases awareness on how important it is to start violence prevention at birth,” said Lynette Stonefeld, director of Tempe/Kyrene Communities In Schools. “Exposure to violence in the early years impacts children’s abilities to think, feel, trust and relate to others.”

For more information on ACT training, visit: [www.actagainstviolence.org](http://www.actagainstviolence.org)

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Tempe/Kyrene Communities In Schools (CIS) is a project of the Tempe Community Council. Our mission is to promote partnerships between the community, schools, and families to encourage young people to stay in school and prepare for life.